GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:403
ANSWERED ON:07.07.2004
ANAEMIA DUE TO MALNUTRITION
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of patients suffering from anemia is increasing constantly; and

(b) if so, the reasons thereof and steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b): The available data shows that there is a decrease in the prevalence of anaemia among pregnant women over the period of last 15 years. However, the overall prevalence of iron deficiency anaemia still continues to be high. Some of the major reasons for wide spread anaema among vulnerable groups of population such as pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls and preschool children are inadequate intake of dietary iron, inadequate absorption of iron from cereal based diets, frequent pregnancies with shorter intervals, high prevalence of infections and infestations and faulty feeding practices.

The Government of India is implementing the National Nutritional Anaemia Control Programme under which iron and folic acid tables are being distributed through Sub-centres and Primary Health Centres to targeted population viz. pregnant women, lactating women, family planning acceptors and children (1-5 yrs old). Under this programme, every pregnant women is given 100 tablets of iron/folic acid (large) for prevention of anaemia. Pregnant women who are anaemic are given an additional 100 tablets. Anaemic children are provided with 100 tablets of iron /folic acid(small). Several steps have been taken to improve nutritional status of women and children. These include the Integrated Child Development Scheme which provides supplementary nutrition to young children and pregnant and lactating mothers. Promotion of exclusive breast-feeding up to six months of age and appropriate feeding-practices is being undertaken.